

alliance. It was an exciting quest for the editors to attempt to trace the origin of the legend of an offer of an alliance, and we discovered that no such offer was ever made by the British Government. Lansdowne merely observed to Paul Cambon; after the Kaiser's visit to Tangier, that the two Governments should keep one another fully informed and should, so far as possible, discuss contingencies in advance. His words were repeated in a letter, interpreted by the French Ambassador as an invitation to a general entente which would in fact amount to an alliance. Delcassé accordingly informed his colleagues at his last Cabinet on June 6, 1905, that an alliance had been offered, and he reiterated the statement to the end of his life. It is a curious instance of an experienced statesman taking the wish for the deed. He was doubtless misled by the fact that the Franco-Russian alliance germinated from the formula of consultation in 1891.

France failed to secure her alliance, but events came to her aid. Her apprehensions on the eve of the Algeiras Conference induced the British Government to sanction non-committal conversations between military and naval experts. A formal promise of military support in the event of an unprovoked German attack was refused; but the authorization of military conversations was a new departure of the utmost importance, and should have been reported to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity. "I do not like the stress laid upon joint preparations," wrote Campbell-Bannerman. "It comes very close to an honourable undertaking." The French request, in my opinion, could not have been declined; but Grey never seemed quite able to realize how far he had gone in transforming the limited treaty obligation of diplomatic support in the Morocco question into a working partnership, which after the Agadir crisis became a defensive

alliance in all but
name. What was dimly recognised in London
was more
clearly understood in Paris and Berlin. Rosebery
expressed
apprehension at our Continental entanglements,
but he stood
alone. Salisbury was dead, and the policy of
splendid isolation
was buried in his grave.

In the autumn of 1906, during the lull which
followed the
anxieties of Algeciras, Eyre Crowe compiled
his celebrated
"Memorandum on the Present State of British
Relations with
France and Germany." It is the longest
document in our
collection, filling twenty-two large pages of
small print.
Copies were circulated at the time to the
members of the